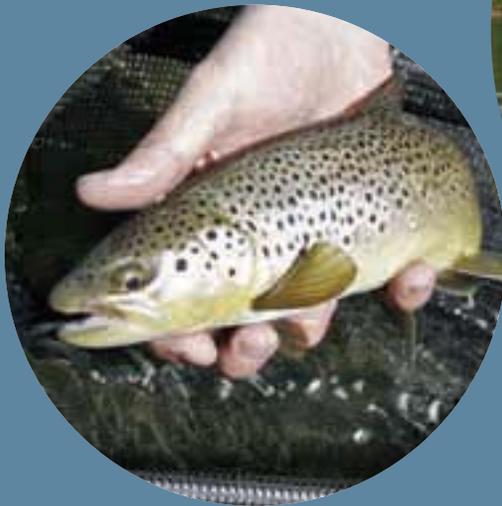




# F O C U S

## on Fishing:



*Guidelines for success*

# Focus on Fishing

Guidelines for success

## Largemouth bass



### General facts

One of the most sought after freshwater fish nationwide, largemouth bass can be found in almost every lake, pond, slow moving river or stream throughout the state. Their diverse diet offers the opportunity for anglers to use a variety of fishing techniques. Bass are a shallow water species for most of the year, often found in or near vegetation, brush piles, logs and stumps, rocks and docks. Targeting these types of structure will lead to many successful fishing trips.

### Prime Fishing Time

Season	Time of Day
Spring	Day time
Summer	Early morning, evening and night
Fall	Daytime
Winter	Daytime

### Seasonality

In early spring, largemouth bass move out of their deep wintering areas and onto shallow flats. Here they remain throughout the spring and into early summer. Higher mid-summer surface water temperatures cause bass to move slightly deeper in the lake in favor of cooler water. In late September and October, bass may school in open areas of the lake, feeding heavily in preparation for the upcoming winter. Winter can be another great time to catch bass, either ice-fishing or in open water.

### Gear:

*Fishing Rod* — 5.5 to 7 ft.

*Line* — 6 to 14 lb. test monofilament

### Key Fishing Areas:

Assunpink Lake, Cooper River Lake, Delaware Lake, Greenwood Lake, Lake Hopatcong, Manasquan Reservoir, Merrill Creek Reservoir, Monksville Reservoir, Newton Lake, Parvin Lake, Rainbow Lake, Round Valley Reservoir, Salem Canal, Splitrock Reservoir, Stone Tavern Lake, Union Lake, Lower Delaware River and Maurice River.

### Size:

Adults typically range 1- 6 lbs. (average 2 lbs.)

### Skillful Angler Award (min. size):

*Adult:* 6 lbs.

*Junior:* 4 lbs.

*Catch & Release:* 21 in.

### State Record:

10 lbs., 14 oz, Menantico Sand Pond (1980)

### Bait

Live minnows, worms or crayfish are common baits for bass fishing. A small split shot weight (size #7) can be added 6 to 9 inches above a #4 hook. A bobber is not necessary, but if preferred, should be placed 12 to 24 inches above the weight. Cast towards structure such as weeds, logs, stumps and docks. Slowly reel in excess line as necessary.

### Artificial Lures

**Spinnerbait** – A 3/8 oz., white or chartreuse spinnerbait with either a #4 willow leaf blade for clear waters, or a #4 Colorado blade in cold and muddy water. Cast in and around structure using a steady retrieve.

**Crankbait** – Use lures approximately 3 to 4 inches in size. Choose colors that mimic the fish on which bass naturally feed such as shiner, sunfish, yellow perch and others. Cast beyond structure and try a steady or varied retrieve.

**Plastic Worms** – Popular colors for bass are black, brown, green, pumpkin or white. Cast near structure, let sink, twitch, retrieve and cast again. *Examples:* Berkley Power Worm, Senko, Zoom Finesse Worm



In late March, try for big, pre-spawn bass in over-wintering holes near shallow spawning areas by casting a 1/4 to 1/2 oz. Rattletrap in shad color for clear water, chartreuse for stained or muddy water. In late June, cast a Texas-rigged plastic worm in and around vegetation.

For more information visit the following Web sites: [www.NJFishandWildlife.com](http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com), [www.bassmaster.com](http://www.bassmaster.com), [www.flwoutdoors.com](http://www.flwoutdoors.com), [www.bassfan.com](http://www.bassfan.com), [www.bassfishin.com](http://www.bassfishin.com), [www.njbassfed.org](http://www.njbassfed.org), and [www.federationnationofnj.org](http://www.federationnationofnj.org).

# Focus on Fishing

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## Smallmouth bass

### General facts

Best known for their airborne leaps and sudden deep dives, smallmouth bass are one of the most exciting species to catch. They are found in medium to large streams and clear, deep lakes and reservoirs. Unlike their close cousins the largemouth bass, smallies prefer cool, clear, swift rivers and cool, deep, rocky lakes. Perhaps James A. Hensall said it best in his *Book of the Black Bass* (1881), "...inch for inch and pound for pound, the gamest fish that swims."



### Seasonality

Similar to largemouth, smallmouth bass become more active in the early spring when water temperatures rise above 50° F. Smallies seek out shallow spawning areas with gravel and rock adjacent to deep water. The summer heat results in a large number of smallmouths moving to deeper areas of the lake with dropoffs and mounds. In rivers and streams, summer smallies will concentrate around breaks in the current near deep water. In late September and October, smallmouths school heavily in open areas of lakes and rivers, feeding on available forage. When water temperatures drop below 50°F metabolism slows, prompting these fish to move into deepwater wintering areas.

### Prime Fishing Time

Season	Time of Day
Spring	Daytime
Summer	Early morning, evening and night
Fall	Daytime
Winter	Daytime

### Gear:

*Fishing Rod* — 5.5 to 7 ft.

*Line* — 6 to 14 lb. test monofilament

### Key Fishing Areas:

Canistear Reservoir, Clinton Reservoir, Echo Lake Reservoir, Manasquan Reservoir, Merrill Creek Reservoir, Monksville Reservoir, Oak Ridge Reservoir, Round Valley Reservoir, Splitrock Reservoir, Union Lake, N/Br and S/Br Raritan River and Delaware River.

### Size:

Adults typically range 1-4 lbs. (average 1.5 lbs.)

### Skillful Angler Award (min. size):

*Adult:* 4 lbs.

*Junior:* 3 lbs.

*Catch & Release:* 19 in.

### State Record:

7 lbs., 2 oz., Round Valley Reservoir (1990)

### Bait

Live minnows, worms, crayfish, and hellgrammites are common baits for smallmouth bass fishing. Add small split shot (size #7) 6 to 12 inches above a #2 hook. In rivers and streams, cast into current breaks and eddy areas, then let the bait drift and bounce along the bottom.

### Artificial Lures

**Crankbait** – Try a #9 floating rainbow trout Rapala. Use the recommended *Rapala Knot* and the slowest retrieve at which you can feel the lure working. For lakes, try a Rapala DT-6 in hot mustard or shad colors.

**Jigs** – A 3.5- to 4-inch green pumpkin tube bait with 1/8 to 1/4 oz. jig. Cast in slow current areas, let sink, twitch, retrieve a few turns and let sink again. Repeat.

**Spinners** – Use a size #2 silver or gold spinner with a slow retrieve. For lakes, try a chartreuse and white 3/8- to 1/2 oz. spinnerbait that has either gold or chartreuse-and-white willow leaf blades.



In the summer, wade the upper Delaware or Raritan River casting a shallow diving crankbait, or spinner. If fishing with crayfish or hellgrammites, keep them alive by storing in a container with wet burlap in your fridge or other cool place.

For more information visit the following Web sites: [www.NJFishandWildlife.com](http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com), [www.bassmaster.com](http://www.bassmaster.com), [www.flwoutdoors.com](http://www.flwoutdoors.com), [www.bassfan.com](http://www.bassfan.com), [www.bassfishin.com](http://www.bassfishin.com), [www.njbassfed.org](http://www.njbassfed.org), and [www.federationnationofnj.org](http://www.federationnationofnj.org).

# Focus on Fishing

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## Walleye



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### Prime Fishing Time

Season	Time of Day
Spring	Early morning
Summer	Early morning, evening, night
Fall	Morning, early evening
Winter	Early evening

### Gear:

*Fishing Rod* — 5.5 to 7 ft.

*Line* — 6 to 14 lb. test monofilament

### Key Fishing Areas:

Canistear Reservoir, Delaware River, Greenwood Lake, Lake Hopatcong, Monksville Reservoir, and Swartswood Lake.

### Size:

Adults typically range 2 - 8 lbs. (average 3 lbs.)

### Skillful Angler Award (min. size):

*Adult:* 6 lbs.

*Junior:* 4.5 lbs.

*Catch & Release:* 24 in.

### State Record:

13 lbs., 9 oz., Delaware River (1993)

### General facts

In terms of popularity, walleye fishing is the fastest growing sport fishery in the country. New Jersey has created top-notch walleye fisheries that may rival many well-known walleye destinations in neighboring states. Due to minimal successful natural-occurring reproduction walleye populations are maintained through annual stocking programs. These trophy specimens are also noted for their excellent eating quality. Walleye prefer moderately deep, large lakes and reservoirs with rocky or gravel bottoms. They are found near the bottom, in and around structure such as rocks, stumps, drop-offs and weeds. Walleye are light sensitive, so they are most active in low light conditions (i.e., overcast days, choppy water, dawn, dusk) and at night.

### Seasonality

In the spring, *lake-dwelling* walleye move from deep wintering areas into the shallows to spawn. During the summer months, they can be found at moderate depths (15 – 30 feet), but may move into the shallow areas at night. As cooler fall temperatures prevail, walleye will begin to move into deeper wintering areas. In *river systems*, walleye reside below dams and islands, and at the mouths of tributaries during the late winter to early spring. During the summer, as with lakes, they can be found at moderate depths, which varies with stream size. In the late fall and winter, walleye seek out deep pool areas.

### Bait

Try minnows, leeches or night crawlers fished on a 1/8 to 3/8 oz. jig retrieved or drifted bouncing along the bottom. In lakes, drift a worm harness or plain-leadered hook or floating jig head with a slip sinker above the barrel swivel (Lindy rig-style) or bounce a sinker along the bottom. Drifting live alewife herring on a #6 hook suspended off the bottom using a 1/4 to 1/2 oz. egg sinker is a simple and very effective method for walleye.

### Artificial Lures

**Crankbait** – Use a 2.5- to 5-inch size crankbait. Popular colors include orange, firetiger, or black/silver. Troll or cast toward the shoreline. *Examples:* Rapala Husky Jerk or Wally Diver.

**Jig** – Use a 1/8- to 3/8-ounce jig, white or chartreuse, tipped with a plastic Mr. Twister or Sassy Shad bounced along the bottom. Use the lightest weight jig that will reach the bottom. Through the ice, in deeper areas of the lake, jig a Rapala Swimming Jig one-foot off the bottom using a repeated lift-and-pause motion.



In lakes, from mid-May to mid-June, cast crankbaits near shore at night to walleye feeding on alewives in the shallows. In the fall, try vertical jigging in deep areas in the early morning or evening. In the winter, on the Delaware River, bounce and retrieve a jig with a night crawler or a 6-in. motor oil-colored power worm.

For more information visit the following Web sites: [www.NJFishandWildlife.com](http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com), [www.njbassfed.org](http://www.njbassfed.org), [www.federationnationofnj.org](http://www.federationnationofnj.org), [www.bassmaster.com](http://www.bassmaster.com), [www.flwoutdoors.com](http://www.flwoutdoors.com), [www.bassfan.com](http://www.bassfan.com) and [www.bassfishin.com](http://www.bassfishin.com).

# Focus on Fishing

Guidelines for success

## Channel catfish

### General facts

The channel catfish is the largest member of the catfish family found in New Jersey. Stocked in 90 waterbodies throughout the state, they can be found in the Delaware River plus large lakes and small urban ponds. Channel catfish are generally bottom feeders, consuming nearly all aquatic life-forms including fish, insects and crustaceans. They feed mostly at night, using their barbels and sense of taste to locate food.



### Seasonality

During the winter, channel catfish are highly concentrated in deep water, lying almost dormant. Their activity increases as water temperatures reach 50° F. At 60° F, channels leave their wintering locations in search of food and will bite readily. Spawning begins when days become longer and water temperatures reaches 75° F. Prime fishing occurs during the summer months where channel catfish can be caught 24 hours-a-day with nighttime being the most productive fishing period.

### Prime Fishing Time

Season	Time of Day
Spring	Day and night
Summer	Early morning, evening and night
Fall	Day and night
Winter	Minimal activity

### Bait

Bottom fishing is the most common technique for channel catfish. Use a #6 to #1 hook, with several large (size #1) split shots attached one to two feet above the hook. A slip sinker rig can be made by threading a 3/4 to 2 oz. egg sinker on the line with a size BB split shot between the hook and sinker, 2 feet above the hook. Also, try a three-way swivel with a hook tied on a 2-foot leader on one eye and on the other eye a 3/4- to 2-ounce bell sinker tied to one foot of 4 pound test monofilament leader. If the sinker gets stuck, the lightweight leader will break and the rest of the rig will be salvaged.

**Cut Baits** – Use oily fish (1-inch chunks), dead shiners, shrimp, chicken liver, hot dogs, crayfish tails and commercial stink baits. Hook cut bait through the center, and replace them often.

**Live Baits** – Hook worms multiple times and leave an inch dangling. Hook large shiners near the dorsal fin, above the lateral line. For crayfish, insert hook on top-side where tail joins the body (parallel to length) so point of hook faces tip of tail.

### Gear:

**Fishing Rod** – 7 ft. medium action  
**Line** — 10 to 15 lb. test monofilament

### Key fishing areas:

Assunpink Lake, Cooper River Lake, Furnace Lake, Lake Hopatcong, Manasquan Reservoir, Mary Elmer Lake, Rising Sun Lake, Spruce Run Reservoir, Stone Tavern Lake and the Delaware River.

### Size:

Adults typically range from 2 to 3 lbs.; however, fish over 5 lbs. are common.

### Skillful Angler Award (min. size):

**Adult:** 10 lbs., 8 oz.  
**Junior:** 8 lbs.  
**Catch & Release:** 35 in.

### State Record:

33 lbs., 3 oz., Lake Hopatcong (1978)

### Artificial Lures

Although artificial lures are not commonly used to catch channel catfish, occasionally they do strike lures. A shallow-diving, chartreuse-colored crankbait may produce results.



Take advantage of a great **night bite** all summer long. Invite friends and line the shoreline of a lake or large river using forked sticks for rod holders. Expect nonstop action from channel cats plus anticipate strikes from additional species such as white catfish, bullheads, American eels and even striped bass.

For more information visit the following Web sites: [www.NJFishandWildlife.com](http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com), [www.brotherhood-of-catfishermen.com](http://www.brotherhood-of-catfishermen.com), [www.catfishingamerica.com](http://www.catfishingamerica.com), [www.catfisherman.net](http://www.catfisherman.net), and [www.catfishing-tips.web1000.com](http://www.catfishing-tips.web1000.com).

# Focus on Fishing

*Guidelines for success*

## Trout: Lakers and Landlocks

### General facts

New Jersey's trout fishing opportunities also include trophy-sized lake trout and most recently, landlocked Atlantic salmon have been reintroduced. Both landlocked salmon and lake trout prefer deep, cold lakes rich with oxygen. Round Valley Reservoir currently supports a naturally-reproducing lake trout population originally introduced in 1977 and may represent the southern-most population for this species in the United States.



Tyler Mason

### Seasonality

During early spring, landlocks and lakers can be found throughout the entire water column including shallower depths close to shore. As surface temperatures increase, they begin to seek cooler, deeper waters. Lake trout inhabit deep water areas from 40 to 120 feet. In Round Valley, 70 feet is a good starting point. In the summer, salmon can be located within the thermocline, the layer of water which separates the warmer top water and the cold denser water on the bottom. In Lake Wawayanda the thermocline is between 14 and 40 feet, and in Lake Aeroflex from 16 to 34 feet. In the fall, when the thermocline breaks up, salmon can be caught on the surface, at the mouths of streams flowing into the lake or along the shoreline. Lakers can be found congregating along rock dikes and dams. In the winter, salmon can be caught through the ice.

### Prime Fishing Time

Season	Time of Day
Spring	Morning, late afternoon
Summer	Early morning
Fall	Anytime
Winter	Daytime

### Bait

Use alewife herring and golden shiners. When drifting live bait from a boat, use a #4 or #6 hook approximately 2 feet below a barrel swivel, with enough weight to bring the bait down to the desired depths. Insert hook near the dorsal fin, above the lateral line. For lake trout fish a foot or two off the bottom. For landlocks, fish as you would for brown trout by suspending the bait just above — or within — the thermocline in mid-summer and nearer the surface in spring and fall. Shoreline anglers can fish live bait on bobbers near drop offs with bait suspended 3 to 5 feet from the bobber.

### Artificial Lures

**Trolling** – Use 3- to 4-inch flutterspoons, chrome or chartreuse with some fluorescent orange on the lure. For lakers, target within 3 feet of the bottom using downriggers. *Examples:* #44 or #88 Sutton spoon; Luhr Jensen's Hood River or Oregon. Streamer flies are popular in New England's landlocked salmon waters. Troll shallow waters in early spring, moving deeper with the use of downriggers by mid-summer.

**Jigging** – Try a 1 to 2 oz. white bucktail jig or a silver or gold metal jigging spoon. Vertically jig by repeatedly dropping and lifting jig or spoon near the bottom; specific techniques vary. *Examples:* Hopkins, Kastmaster, and the Crippled Herring.

### Gear:

*Fishing Rod* — 6 to 9 ft.

*Line* — 6 to 17 lb. test monofilament

### Key Fishing Areas:

Round Valley and Merrill Creek Reservoir for lake trout;

Lake Aeroflex and Wawayanda Lake for landlocked Atlantic salmon.

### Size:

Typical range: 2 - 4 lbs.

### Skillful Angler Award (min)

Lake trout

*Adult:* 12 lbs.

*Junior:* 8 lbs.

*Catch & Release:* 31 in.

### State Record:

Lake trout 32 lbs., 8 oz.  
Round Valley (2002)

Landlocked salmon 8 lbs.  
Lake Aeroflex (1951)



For lakers from January through March, try bucktails or spoons in 70- to 90-foot depths. For landlocked salmon, troll crankbaits, spoons or streamer flies near the surface after ice-out.

# Focus on Fishing

Guidelines for success

## Hybrid striped bass



### General facts

A cross between a striped bass and white bass, the combined traits of these two species make hybrid striped bass a voracious game species. They are well adapted to several large lakes and reservoirs in the state. Unlike many other game species, the hybrid striped bass is a schooling species that prefers open water. Hybrid stripers occasionally congregate on drop-offs, points of land and sunken islands.

Hybrids feed predominantly on herring and are most active during periods of low light. Populations are maintained through an annual stocking program.

### Seasonality

In early spring, hybrids are found near stream channels, and at the mouths of tributaries. By mid-spring, through early fall, hybrids are suspended at moderate depths of 10 to 20 feet throughout the entire lake. They may move into the shallows and near the surface at night, following herring. In the summer at Spruce Run, fish in 12 feet of water or less, as oxygen levels bottom out as the water heats up. In Lake Hopatcong target depths 15 feet or less. As cooler temperatures prevail in the fall, they move to deeper wintering areas.

### Prime Fishing Time

Season	Time of Day
Spring	Day time
Summer	Evening
Fall	Daytime
Winter	Midday

### Gear:

*Fishing Rod* — 5.5 to 7 ft.

*Line* — 6 to 8 lb. test monofilament

### Key Fishing Areas:

Lake Hopatcong, Manasquan Reservoir and Spruce Run Reservoir.

### Size:

Adults typically range 2 - 8 lbs. (average 3 lbs.)

### Skillful Angler Award (min. size):

*Adult:* 8 lbs.

*Junior:* 6 lbs.

*Catch & Release:* 24 in.

### State Record:

16 lbs., 4 oz., Culvers Lake (1999)

### Bait

Live alewife or shiner suspended at 10 to 20-foot depths using a 1/4 to 3/4 oz. egg sinker or slip bobber, with a #6 or #4 hook depending on the size of your bait. A live or dead herring trolled using down riggers or in-line sinker. Chicken liver or night crawlers fished from the shoreline using an egg sinker to fish on the bottom. Fishing with an open bale or a very light drag setting is recommended by the pros to prevent loss of line and fish.

### Artificial Lures

**Crankbait:** A 2.5 to 5 in. black/silver, gold, or firetiger crankbait, trolled or cast towards shore or to surface feeding hybrids. *Examples:* Rapala Shad Rap, Rapala Husky Jerk, Storm Thunderstick or Storm Swimming Minnow. As for stick baits try a Thin-Fin, in purple and white/silver.

**Rattletrap:** A 1/4 to 1/2 oz. blue/silver rattle trap. Cast towards points and drop offs. *Examples:* Bill Lewis Rat-L-Trap or Rattlin' Rapala.



On summer evenings when hybrids move towards the surface feeding on herring, cast shallow running, minnow imitation crankbaits to the edge of the schooling herring.

For more information, visit the following Web sites: [www.NJFishandWildlife.com](http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com) and [www.kneedeepclub.org](http://www.kneedeepclub.org).

# Focus on Fishing

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## Muskellunge



### General facts

The largest member of the pike family, muskellunge are one of the sport-fish most highly-prized by anglers. Reaching over 4 feet in length, Jersey muskies grow to trophy proportions that rival fish from many of the best waters in the country. This elusive fish is seldom abundant, with one adult fish per acre considered a good fishery. Known as the fish of 10,000 casts, muskellunge in New Jersey do not stick by that standard and are routinely caught with less effort. Muskies are generally a shallow-water fish, preferring areas of weeds, logs and other cover in both lake and river environments.

### Prime Fishing Time

Season	Time of Day
Spring	Daytime
Summer	Early morning, evening and night
Fall	Daytime
Winter	Daytime

### Seasonality

Fishing is relatively consistent from late spring to mid-fall, with September and October considered two of the best months. Most muskie fishing takes place during daylight hours, with the afternoon considered the most productive time of day. Muskies will move deeper as waters become increasingly warm in the summer months.

### Bait

Attach a #2/0 single hook or 1/0 treble hook to a 12-inch wire leader. Thread the hook through the lips or behind the dorsal fin of a 6- to 10-inch sucker, trout (purchased), or shiner and suspend the bait by attaching a float 2 to 3 feet above the leader. Exercise caution when using live bait to prevent killing muskies that may swallow the hook. If the hook has been swallowed, do not try to remove it but carefully cut the leader at the point closest to the mouth. When planning to catch and release these trophy specimens, use artificial lures.

### Artificial Lures

Cast large, 5- to 9-inch, sucker or perch colored crankbaits (*examples*: Believer or Swim Whiz), bucktail spinners (*example*: Mepps Musky Killer), or chartreuse spinnerbaits (1/2 to 1 oz.) around available structure and edges of weed beds. Retrieve quickly. Trolling these lures is often effective once the waters have warmed and the fish have moved deeper. The rule of thumb is smaller lures in the spring and larger lures during the fall. If muskies frequently follow the lure to the boat without striking, swirl the lure through the water in a figure eight pattern at the end of the retrieve.

### Gear:

*Fishing Rod* — 6.5 to 7.5 ft.

*Line* — 20 lb. test or greater monofilament with a 12 in. wire leader or 50 lb. test braided line with wire leader

### Key Fishing Areas:

Echo Lake Reservoir, Greenwood Lake, Lake Hopatcong, Manasquan Reservoir, Monksville Reservoir, Mercer Lake, Mountain Lake, and Delaware River. Developing fishery at Cooper River Lake.

### Size:

Adults typically range 10-30 lbs. (average 15 lbs.)

### Skillful Angler Award (min. size):

*Adult*: 20 lbs.

*Junior*: 15 lbs.

*Catch & Release*: 40 in.

### State Record:

42 lbs., 13 oz., Monksville Reservoir (1997)



After ice-out, target shallow waters and tributaries flowing into the lake for some early season, pre-spawn muskies using bucktails and top-waters.

For more information visit the following Web sites: [www.NJFishandWildlife.com](http://www.NJFishandWildlife.com), [www.bassmaster.com](http://www.bassmaster.com), [www.flwoutdoors.com](http://www.flwoutdoors.com), [www.bassfan.com](http://www.bassfan.com), [www.bassfishin.com](http://www.bassfishin.com), [www.njbassfed.org](http://www.njbassfed.org), and [www.federationnationofnj.org](http://www.federationnationofnj.org).